

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0188

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 8564

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PINS, ET, US

SUBJECT: RELATIONSHIP OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO INTERNAL
POLITICAL SCENE

REF: STATE 154760

1. REFTTEL INDICATES THAT WASHINGTON IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING
LIMIT FOR ETHIOPIAN CASH PURCHASE OF ARMS "IN LIGHT OF THE
UNSETTLED INTERNAL SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA". WE WISH OUTLINE
REASONS WHY WE HAVE BELIEVED, AND CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, THAT
CURRENT KIND OF FLUIDITY IN INTERNAL SITUATION HERE SHOULD NOT
ADVERSELY AFFECT USG ATTITUDE TOWARDS MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR
ETHIOPIA.

2. FIRST QUESTION IS WHETHER ARMS NOW BEING SOUGHT BY ETHIO-
PIANS ARE LIKELY BE USED IN A CIVIL WAR. SUCH A CONFLICT, AT
LEAST IN FORM OF A BRIEF, VIOLENT CLASH BETWEEN SOME UNITS OF
ARMED FORCES, APPEARS LESS LIKELY THAN BEFORE BUT REMAINS A
POSSIBILITY. EMBASSY OF COURSE FULLY ALIVE TO PROBLEMS THIS
WOULD POSE FOR USG. HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF USG'S DECISION RE-
GARDING PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT BY IEG, IT IS

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CLEAR THAT VIRTUALLY ALL MILITARY EQUIPMENT UTILIZED IN SUCH A

CONFLICT WOULD BE OF AMERICAN ORIGIN ANYWAY. MOREOVER, THE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS WHICH IEG IS NOW SEEKING SUCH AS SIDE-WINDERS, F-5E AIRCRAFT, M-60 TANKS, VULCAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT, ETC. APPEAR LEAST LIKELY TYPES OF WEAPON TO BE USED IN SUCH A CONFLICT.

3. A SECOND QUESTION IS WHETHER ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES ARE LIKELY BECOME SO DISORGANIZED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE USE THE NEW EQUIPMENT EFFECTIVELY IN EVENT OF A SOMALI ATTACK. WHILE THIS SITUATION WILL BEAR WATCHING, IT DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY THAT IEMF WILL BE UNABLE TO CARRY OUT EFFECTIVE TRAINING ON THESE WEAPONS. SHOULD SOMALIA ATTACK, WE WOULD EXPECT COHESION AND DISCIPLINE ADEQUATE TO THEIR USE.

4. A THIRD QUESTION IS WHETHER DOMESTIC TURMOIL COULD SOMEHOW LEAD TO AN ETHIOPIAN PREEMPTIVE ATTACK AGAINST SOMALIA. WE CANNOT OF COURSE GUARANTEE THAT THIS COULD NOT OCCUR. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT MILITARY OFFICERS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM ARE GREATLY CONCERNED AT PRESENT BY SOMALIA'S WEAPONS SUPERIORITY IN VITAL CATEGORIES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS IN EVALUATING IEMF'S CAPACITY OBTAIN MILITARY SUCCESS FROM A NEAR TO MID-TERM PREEMPTIVE ATTACK.

5. A FOURTH QUESTION IS WHETHER WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH COMES INTO POSSESSION OF THESE WEAPONS WILL BE ONE WHICH IS FRIENDLY TO US. THERE ARE OF COURSE SOME WITHIN THE REFORM GROUPS, PARTICULARLY AMONG STUDENTS, WHO ARE HOSTILE TO USG AND WOULD BE INCLINED PURSUE AN ANTI-AMERICAN POLICY. WE ESTIMATE THAT THIS ELEMENT STILL CONSTITUTES A SMALL MINORITY WITHIN ARMED FORCES, HOWEVER, AND LIKELIHOOD OF IT OBTAINING CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT THEREFORE APPEARS SMALL. WE ANTICIPATE, ON OTHER HAND, THAT THERE WOULD BE A RAPID AND SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT IF SOMALIA SHOULD ATTACK ETHIOPIA AND DEFEAT ETHIOPIAN FORCES IN OGADEN.

6. FIFTH QUESTION IS WHETHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ENDELKACHEW GOVERNMENT MAY EVENTUALLY BE HELD AGAINST US BECAUSE OF UNPOPULARITY OF THAT GOVERNMENT. WE BELIEVE THE MILITARY ARE SO AGREED UPON NEED FOR ADDITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE THAT THERE IS LITTLE DANGER OF THIS. WASHINGTON WILL HAVE NOTED IN THIS

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CONNECTION GENERAL AMAN'S RECENT REPORT TO CHMAAG THAT AFCC IS INTENSELY INTERESTED IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM US (ADDIS 8409). WYMAN

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